

In 1912 *Impressions d'Afrique* ran as a play with a distinguished cast and important praises by Apollinaire, Duchamp, and Picabia, but its unorthodoxy aroused vehement public ridicule. *Locus Solus* was likewise adapted for the stage in 1922, and Roussel wrote two additional plays, *L'Etoile au Front* (1925) and *La Poussière de Soleils* (1927). The surrealists defended *L'Etoile* and confronted the jeering audiences; the fighting aroused public scandal.

Roussel's sexuality is described by Houppermans as not unlike his writing: "Pluperversity, that fundamental elasticity, that continuous back and forth of libidinal drives, was to be the hallmark of a new universe." Roussel found a new realm of libidinal pleasures (including both drugs and men) in travel: in 1920–21 he visited India, Australia, New Zealand, Tahiti, China, Japan, the United States, and other developing areas. His greatest fascination was with Africa, where he often visited and found inspiration.

In 1933 he took up lodgings in Palermo, Sicily, with his platonic companion Madame Du Frêne, who never established whether his death was by accident or suicide. His ending, like his writing, remains (as he said of the surrealists) "a bit obscure." Roussel's obscurity was not entirely clarified by his posthumous (1935) explanations of *How I Wrote Certain of My Books* (perhaps an echo of Nietzsche's "Why I Write Such Good Books"). "Taking the word *palmier* I decided to consider it in two senses: as a *pastry* and as a *tree*. Considering it as a *pastry*, I searched for another word, itself having two meanings which could be linked to it by the preposition *à*; thus I obtained (and it was, I repeat, a long and arduous task) *palmier* (a kind of pastry) *à restauration* (restaurant which serves pastries); the other part gave me *palmier* (a palmtree) *à restauration* (restoration of a dynasty). Which yielded the palmtree in Trophies Square commemorating the restoration of the Talou dynasty."

Michel Foucault analyzed the relation between Roussel's cryptology and homosexuality: "When Cocteau wrote his works, people said, 'It's not surprising that he flaunts his sexuality and his sexual preferences with such ostentation since he is a homosexual.' . . . and about Proust they said, 'It's not surprising that he hides and reveals his sexuality, that he lets it appear clearly while also hiding it in his work, since he is a homosexual.' And it could also be said about Roussel, 'It's not surprising that he hides it completely since he is a homosexual.'"

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Charley Shively

ROZANOV, VASILII VASIL'EVICH (1856–1919)

Russian writer and social critic.

Rozanov came of a poor middle-class family from the government of Vetluga. Educated in a classical high school, he then studied history at the University of Moscow. He taught history and geography for many years in various provincial secondary schools, but had no vocation as a pedagogue. About 1880 he married Apollinaria Suslova, a woman near forty, who in her youth had been intimate with Dostoevsky. Apollinaria was a cold, proud, "infernal" woman, with unknown depths of cruelty and sensuality, who left Rozanov after three years but refused him a divorce. Several years later Rozanov met Varvara Rudneva, who became his unofficial wife

and with whom his liaison was completely happy.

In 1886 Rozanov published a book, *On Understanding*, an attack on the positivism and official agnosticism that prevailed at the University of Moscow. Though it had no success, it attracted the attention of the historian N. N. Strakhov, who began a correspondence with him, introduced him to the conservative literary press, and finally arranged an official appointment in St. Petersburg for him, which did not help him much, as he remained in straitened circumstances until 1899, when he was invited by Suvorin to write for *Novoe vremia* (New Times), the only conservative newspaper that paid its contributors well. The editor gave him not only a comfortable income, but also a free hand to write whatever he liked and as often as he liked, so long as each article did not take up too much space. Among his early writings was *The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor* (1890), a commentary on the episode in Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. Having obtained through his wife access to certain hidden aspects of Dostoyevsky's mind, he discerned with wonderful acuteness the novelist's striving toward absolute freedom, including the freedom of not desiring happiness.

As the years passed Rozanov's Russian style matured, and so did his intellectual personality. He had a profoundly mystical and religious temperament, was a born Slavophile, and detested the cosmopolitanism of the Russian intelligentsia just as much as their agnosticism. Recognized and lauded only by the right, he somewhat inconsistently wrote conservative articles for *Novoe vremia* under his real name, and radical ones for the progressive *Russkoe slovo* (Russian Word) under the pseudonym V. Varvarin. At the time of the trial of Mendel Beilis in Kiev (1911-13), he wrote pieces accusing the Jewish people of ritual murder, so that he gained the reputation of a conscienceless hack journalist. In his last work, *Apoka-*

lipsis nashego vremeni (The Apocalypse of Our Time; 1918), he decried the October Revolution as the coming of the Antichrist. Reduced to extreme want and misery, he died in 1919.

On the subject of homosexuality he composed a work entitled *Liudi lun-nogo sveta: Metafizika khristianstva* (Moonlight Men: The Metaphysics of Christianity; second edition, 1913), which was inspired by the writings of the pre-Freudian investigators of abnormal sexuality, notably Krafft-Ebing and Forel, but far transcended their narrow psychiatric approach by virtue of his insight into the role of the homosexual character type in the history of Christianity. He rejected the late nineteenth-century conception of the **invert** as "perverted" or "sick," arguing instead that such an individual had a divinely appointed mission in society, that he was not intended for heterosexuality and marriage. He claimed that the homosexual is "a third person around Adam and Eve, as a matter of fact, the 'Adam' from whom 'Eve' has not yet emerged—the first, complete Adam." In the cosmological scheme of things, androgyny and bisexuality preceded sexual dimorphism and reproduction. As an archaic, primordial type, the homosexual has more of the intuitive, more of the metaphysical perception of the world that underlies the religious vocation.

Such anomalous individuals, Rozanov believed, were the backbone of **asceticism**, pagan and Christian, ancient and modern. It was **Christianity** that elevated the ascetic ideal to the center of its moral teaching. From the lives of Russian saints with their insurmountable refusal to marry or submit to the conventions of heterosexual life, Rozanov concluded that the moral "I will not!" was only the mask of a much deeper, psychological "I cannot." "A fact of Nature unknown to the compilers of the saints' *vitae* was taken for an especially profound, especially pure profession of a religion of chastity." Un-

known in the West, and reduced to the status of a non-person in Soviet Russia, Rozanov nevertheless should be remembered for having probed one of the mysteries of Christian history: the affinity of many homosexual men and women for a religion that formally condemned and excluded them.

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Warren Johansson

RUMI (1207-1273)

Persian poet and mystic; founder of the Malawiyya order of dervishes. His name was derived from Rum (Central Anatolia), where he mainly lived, but he was also known by the sobriquet Mawlana. Rumi was born in Balkh and died in Konya.

After schooling in theology and mysticism, Jalal al-Din Rumi followed in the footsteps of his father Baha' al-Din Walad (d. 1231) and became a preacher. In 1244 he fell in love with a wandering dervish, Shams al-Din (ca. 1185-1248), who became the sun in his life: "A burning candle came and fired me with its naked flame." It was a mutual attraction, and each found in the other something for which he had been looking all of his life. Rumi saw Shams as "the Beloved," while Shams found in Rumi a true master and friend.

For six months they were inseparable, which made Rumi neglect his religious and social duties. This caused complaints from his wife and children and especially from his pupils, who jealously resented the intruder and even threatened him. Shams fled because of this, leaving Rumi behind full of grief: "Sweet moon without thy ray like a cloud I weep." But fortunately, Shams was found in Damas-

cus and brought back by Rumi's son Walad. When they met again they embraced and kissed each other warmly, and according to Walad nobody knew who was the lover and who the beloved.

But the jealousy and hate of the pupils knew no bounds and in 1248 they killed Shams with the help of Rumi's own son 'Ala' al-Din. All of this was concealed from Rumi, who thought that Shams had just left again. He felt desolate, his eyes and soul had gone, without him life was unbearable. He searched through Syria and wrote many poems with lamentations and cries of despair, but after a time he gave up hope and found comfort by identifying with Shams, so they were one after all.

The relationship between Rumi and Shams was unique because it was not the usual adoration for Divine Beauty in the form of a beautiful youth, as in Sufism, but a love between two older mystics of great personal strength and character. According to some sources, Shams was killed by having a wall thrown upon his head, which could symbolically refer to the Islamic story of Lot. Although this may suggest homosexual behavior, the writer thinks it designates the resentment of the pupils against a person whom they considered evil in general, because he had seduced their master away from the true religion. Rumi and Shams had a quite intimate and, probably, a purely spiritual friendship, in which sex had no part because it would interfere with the equality of friendship and the purity of love.

During the last twenty-five years of his life, Rumi found inspiration in music and dance and in relationships with the goldsmith Salah al-Din Zarkub (d. 1258), who became a mirror to his sun, and after his death, with Celebi Husam al-Din (d. 1283), who inspired him to write down his wisdom. This time he was more careful with his pupils, and threatened to desert them if they would not stop their malicious slander of his friends. In 1273 Rumi died at sunset; it is told that his cat refused food and died one week after him.